

Wreck of the SS Richard Montgomery: Mitigating Risks QSD on 3 July 2019

This briefing identifies relevant reports and useful documents, including recent parliamentary materials and press articles, which may be of assistance to Members in preparing for the following debate:

Lord Harris of Haringey to ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to mitigate the risks posed by the wreck of SS Richard Montgomery.

Copies of the materials are available for collection from the Library.

Key Information

- House of Lords, [‘Written Question: SS Richard Montgomery’](#), 9 April 2019, HL14951

Written answer in which the Government states that the Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the long-term management of the wreck, working closely with the Ministry of Defence and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The Government described this as a key priority for the DfT and that regular surveys of the wreck are carried out by the MCA.

- Maritime and Coastguard Agency, [SS Richard Montgomery](#), 4 January 2016

Background information on the SS Richard Montgomery including details on protection, surveys and management of the wreck. The US ship was wrecked in the Thames Estuary, near Sheerness, in August 1944, with approximately 1,400 tons of live explosives on board. The wreck is monitored but “the risk of a major explosion is believed to be remote”.

- Maritime and Coastguard Agency, [SS Richard Montgomery Survey Report 2017](#), January 2019

Latest survey report of the SS Richard Montgomery commissioned by the MCA. The report outlines the outcome of surveys of the wreck undertaken in November 2017 and April 2018. The survey suggested that the wreck was stable overall, with any structural changes being restricted to discrete regions. The report stated that environmental monitoring equipment would be placed on the seabed for a period of twelve months, with results expected in late 2019.

Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- House of Lords, [‘Written Question: SS Richard Montgomery’](#), 9 April 2019, HL14953
- House of Lords, [‘Written Question: SS Richard Montgomery’](#), 9 April 2019, HL14954
- House of Commons, [‘Written Question: SS Richard Montgomery’](#), 2 December 2015, 17486

Press Articles and Comment

- Sara C Nelson, '[SS Richard Montgomery Packed With Explosives Could Create Tsunami in Thames Estuary](#)', Huffington Post, 12 June 2017
- Peter Sherlock, '[Does WWII Wreck SS Richard Montgomery Threaten Thames Airport?](#)', BBC News, 28 June 2013
- Carsten Holm, '[German Waters Teeming With WWII Munitions](#)', Spiegel Online, 11 April 2013

Further Information

- Maritime and Coastguard Agency, '[The SS Richard Montgomery: Information And Survey Reports](#)', accessed 24 June 2019
- Royal Navy, '[HMS Kent Trains With Emergency Services](#)', 18 February 2019
- John Nurden, '[New Photos Reveal State of Richard Montgomery Wreck Off Sheerness](#)', Kent Online, 10 June 2019
- Mick Hamer, '[Doomsday Wreck in Thames Could Blow](#)', *New Scientist*, 20 August 2004

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